

# MEMOIRS OF LITERATURE.

MONDAY, March 10. 1712.

## I.

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT of the  
Life and Trial of MICHAEL  
SERVETUS. In several Let-  
ters to \*\*\*\*

## Letter VI.

S I R,

**I**N order to give you as compleat an Account, as I can, of every thing relating to *Servetus*, I must take notice of some other Letters, besides those mentioned in my last. I begin with a Letter (a) of *Calvin* to *Sulcerus*, a Divine of *Switzerland*, written the 9th of September. *Calvin* tells him, That he has doubtless heard of *Servetus*; that he is the same Person, of whom *Bucer*, tho' otherwise a moderate Man, said in the Pulpit, that he deserved to have his Entrails pluck'd out, and to be torn in Pieces. "Is est de quo fidelis Christi Minister, & sanctæ memoriæ D. Bucerus, cum alioqui mansueto esset ingenio, pro suggestu pronuntiavit, dignum esse qui avulsis visceribus discerneretur". *Calvin* adds, that *Servetus* was apprehended and imprisoned by

his means: "Tandem huc malis auspiciis appulsum, unus ex Syndicis, me autore, in carcerem duci jussit. Neque enim dissimulo quin officii mei duxerim, hominem plusquam obstinatum & indomitum, quoad in me erat, compescere, ne longius manaret contagio". Afterwards *Calvin* represents to *Sulcerus*, that the Prisoner is guilty of the most pernicious Errors, that can be thought of; and that far from expressing any Repentance, he maintains them with an intolerable Pride and Obstinacy. The Design of this Letter does plainly appear from the following Words. "Sed quia tibi curæ fore spero, ut hominis impietas quibus meretur elogiis pingatur, plura non addam. Tantum unius rei te admonitum volo, Quæstorem urbis, qui tibi has litteras reddet, in hac causa recto esse animo, ut saltem exitum quem optamus, non fugiat. Utinam veteres tui discipuli eodem modo animati forent".

The 23d of August, *Calvin* writ a Letter (b) to the Ministers of the Church of *Francfort*, whereby he informed them, that *Servetus* had printed at *Vienne* a Book full of Errors and Blasphemies; that many Copies had been sent to *Francfort* the last Easter-Fair; that the Printer's Factor, being a pious Man, had not been willing to expose them to Sale; and that the Bearer of that Letter would tell

(a) *Calvin. Epist. p. 114. Genev. 1575.*

(b) *Ubi supra, pag. 115.*



them in what Warehouse they were to be found. Lastly, he desires those Divines to burn (a) all those Books. He acquaints them, that the Author is a close Prisoner; and adds, that he hopes *Servetus* will be quickly punish'd. "Auctor ipse tenetur in carcere a Magistratu nostro, & propediem, ut spero, daturus est poenas."

*Bullinger*, another Divine of *Switzerland*, writ a Letter (b) to *Calvin*, dated September 14. which contains a remarkable Passage. The Lord (says he) has given the Magistrates of *Geneva* a fair Opportunity of clearing themselves and the Church from Heresy by delivering *Servetus* into their Hands. Therefore if they treat that Rascal as he deserves, all the World will see that the *Genevois* hate Blasphemers; that they prosecute with the Sword of Justice those Hereticks, who are truly obstinate; and that they maintain and vindicate the Glory of God. "Obtulit quidem Dominus materiam per occasionem accommodatissimam Amplissimo Senatus Genevensi se & Ecclesiam expurgandi a labe seu foeditate hæreseos, dum *Servetum* illum Hispanum in manus ejus dedit. — Si ergo huic rependeret Amplissimus Senatus, quod blasphemoni debetur, totus Orbis cerneret Genevenses blasphemos odisse; hæreticos, qui vere sunt pertinaces hæretici, gladio justitiæ prosequi; & gloriam Majestatis divinæ vindicare."

I find the following Words in a Letter (c) of *Calvin* to *Bullinger*, dated October 25. "Tis not known yet what will be the Fate of that Man (*Servetus*). However, as far as I can guess, the Judges will condemn him To-morrow, and he will be executed the next Day". *Quid de homine futurum scit, nondum scitur. Quantum tamen conjecturis assequor, cras feretur in Curia judicium, perendie vero ad supplicium ducetur.*

It appears to me, that the 23d of October the Judges were resolved to condemn *Servetus* to be burnt alive. I infer it from a

(a) All the Copies of the *Christianismi Reformatio*, except some few, were burnt at *Vienne*, and at *Francfort*; which is the Reason why that Book is so scarce.

(b) Ubi supra, pag. 127.

(c) Ibid.

Passage relating to that Day, which I shall insert in the Margin (a).

Accordingly on the 26th of the same Month, that unfortunate Heretick was actually condemned to undergo that Punishment. *Beza* did not scruple to say, that he was condemned *ex omnium etiam Helveticarum Ecclesiarum sententia*. (b).

On the same Day (October 26) *Calvin* acquainted *Farel*, how *Servetus's* Case stood. That Letter being very Curious, I shall transcribe the greatest Part of it. "The (c) Messenger (says he) that was sent to the *Swiss*, is come back. They all unanimously declare, that *Servetus* has revived the impious Errors, with which Satan did formerly disturb the Church, and that he is an intolerable Monster. Those of *Basile* are right. Those of *Zurich* are the most violent, (*Tigurini omnium vehementissimi*); for they express the Heinousness of his Impiety in very emphatical Words, and exhort our Magistrates to use him severely."

(a) "Après avoir entendu les réponses avant mises, & l'arrest aujourd'hui fait, en semble l'avis des Sieurs Ministres des Eglises, l'on a remis ledit Inquys Michel Servet à ouir la bonne volonté de Messieurs, & à dire droit de jour à jour".

(b) See my last Letter, pag. 60.

(c) Rediit ab Helvetiis nuncius. Uno consensu pronunciant omnes, *Servetum* impios errores, quibus olim turbavit Satan Ecclesiam, nunc renovasse, & monstrum esse non ferendum. Cordati *Basilienses*. *Tigurini omnium vehementissimi*. Nam & impietatum atrocitas graviter ab illis exprimitur, & hortantur Senatum nostrum ad severitatem. Subscribunt *Schaphusiani*. *Bernensium* literis etiam appositis accedunt & Senatus literæ, quibus non parum stimulari sunt nostri. *Cæsar comicus* simulato per triduum morbo, in Curiam tandem ascendit, ut sceleratum istum poena eximeret. Neque enim erubuit petere ut cognitio ad Ducentos veniret: sine controversia tamen damnatus est. Cras ad supplicium ducetur. Genus mortis conati sumus mutare, sed frustra. Cur nihil profecerimus, coram narrandum differo. Ubi supra pag. 115,

"Those



“ Those of *Schaffhausen* subscribe to their Judgment. The Letter of the Divines of *Berne*, which is also to the Purpose, is attended with that of their Senate, whereby our Magistrates have been very much animated. *Cesar*, a comical Man, who pretended to be sick for Three Days, came to Court at last, to acquit that profligate Fellow; for he was not ashamed to propose, that the Cause should be removed to the Council of *Two Hundred*. Nevertheless he has been condemned without any Dispute. He will be executed to morrow. We have endeavoured to commute that Sort of Death; but it was in vain. I will tell you when I see you, why the Judges have not granted our Request. ’Tis observable, that this Letter was written to *Farel* at *Neufchatel* the 26th of *October*; and that he arrived at *Geneva* the next Day, and consequently before he could receive it. I believe he came to *Geneva* of his own Motion, to be present at *Servetus*’s Execution: He had a mind to see whether that Heretick would edify the Spectators (a).

At last on the 27th of *October*, *Servetus* was sentenced (b) to be burnt alive. Here follows the Sentence, with the Process prefixed to it.

#### Procès (c)

fait & formé par devant Nos très redoutés Seigneurs Sindiques, Juges des Causes criminelles de ceste Cité, à la poursuite & instance du Seigneur Lieutenant de ceste dite Cité, ès dites causes instant

Contre

Michel Servet de Ville-neuve  
au Royaume d’Arragon  
en Espagne.

“ Lequel premierement est esté atteint d’avoir, il y a environ 23 à 24

(a) See my last Letter, pag. 63.

(b) “ Le 27 *Octobre* 1553. Le Susdit Michel Servet a esté condamné à estre brûlé, & leuë la Sentence par le Sieur Sindicq Darlod, a esté executée, & les Livres brûlés ”.

(c) These Two Pieces do perfectly agree with the Original: Only there are some Words, in which the Orthography is not exactly the same.

ans, fait imprimer un Livre à Agnon ( it should be Haguenau ) en Allemagne contre la Sainte & Individue Trinité, contenant plusieurs & grands Blasphemes contre icelle, grandement scandaleux ès Eglises des dites Allemagnes: lequel livre il a spontanément confessé avoir fait imprimer, nonobstant les remonstrances & corrections à luy faites de ses faulx opinions par les scavans Docteurs Evangelistes des dites Allemagnes.

“ Item, Et lequel livre a esté par les Docteurs d’icelles Eglises d’Allemagne, comme plein d’heresies, reprouvé, & ledit Servet rendu fugitif des dites Allemagnes, à cause du dit livre.

“ Item, Et nonobstant cela led. Servet a perseveré en ses faulx erreurs, infectant d’icelles plusieurs à son possible.

“ Item, Et non content de cela, pour mieux divulguer & espandre son dit venin & heresie, depuis peu de temps en ça il a fait imprimer un autre livre à cachette dans Vienne en Dauphiné, rempli des dites heresies, horribles & execrables blasphemes contre la Sainte Trinité, contre le Fils de Dieu, contre le Baptisme des petits Enfans, & autres plusieurs saints passages & fondemens de la Religion Chrestienne.

“ Item, A spontanément confessé qu’en iceluy livre, il appelle ceux qui croient en la Trinité, Trinitaires & Atheïstes.

“ Item, Et qu’il appelle icelle Trinité, un D — & monstre à trois têtes.

“ Item, Et contre le vrai fondement de la Religion Chrestienne, & blasphémant detestablement contre le Fils de Dieu, a dit Jesus Christ n’estre Fils de Dieu de toute éternité, ains tant seulement depuis son Incarnation.

“ Item, Et contre ce que dit l’Escripture Jesus Christ estre Fils de David selon la chair, il le nie malheureusement, disant icelui estre créé de la substance de Dieu le Pere, ayant receu trois Elemens d’icelui, & un tant seulement de la Vierge; en quoy meschamment il pretend abolir la vraye & entiere Humanité de Nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ, la souveraine consolation du pource genre humain.

“ Item, Et que le Baptisme des petits Enfans n’est qu’une invention Diabolique & Sorcellerie.

K 2

“ Item,



“ Item, Et plusieurs autres points & articles, & execrables blasphemes, desquels le dit livre est tout farci, grandement scandaleux, & contre l’honneur & Majesté de Dieu, du Fils de Dieu, & du Saint Esprit: qui est un cruel & horrible meurtrement, perdition & ruine de plusieurs pures ames, estans par sa dessus dite de loiale & detestable doctrine trahies. Chose épouvantable à reciter.

“ Item, Et lequel Servet rempli de malice intitula iceluy son livre, ainsi dressé contre Dieu & sa sainte Doctrine Evangelique, CHRISTIANISMI RESTITUTIO, qui est à dire, *Restitution du Christianisme*; & ce pour mieux seduire & tromper les pures ignorans, & pour plus commodément infecter de son malheureux & meschant venin les lecteurs de son dit livre, sous l’ombre de bonne doctrine.

“ Item, Et outre le des susdit livre, assaillant par lettres mesmes nostre Foy, & mettant peine icelle infecter de sa poison, a volontairement confessé & reconnu avoir escrit lettre à un des Ministres de cette Cité, dans laquelle entre autres plusieurs horribles & enormes blasphemes contre nostre sainte Religion Evangelique, il dit nostre Evangile estre sans foy & sans Dieu, & que pour un Dieu nous avons un C — re à t r — s t — tes.

“ Item, Et a davantage volontairement confessé, qu’au dessus dit lieu de Vienne, a cause d’icelui meschant & abominable livre & opinions, il fut fait prisonnier; les quelles prisons perfidement il rompit & échapa.

“ Item, Et n’est seulement dressé le dit Servet en sa Doctrine contre la vraie Religion Chrestienne; mais comme arrogant innovateur d’heresies, contre la Papistique, & autres; si que à Vienne mesme il est esté brulé en Effigie, & de ses dits livres cinq bales brulées.

“ Item, Et nonobstant tout cela, estant ici es prisons de cette Cité detenu, n’a laissé de persister malicieusement en ses dites meschantes & detestables erreurs, les taschant soustenir avec injures & calomnies contre tous vrais Chretiens & fideles tenementiers de la pure immaculée Religion Chrestienne, les appellant *Tritaires*, *Atheistes* & *Sorciers*, nonobstant les remonstrances à luy déjà des long temps en Allemagne, comme est dit, faites, & au mepris des reprehensions,

“ emprisonnemens & corrections à luy tant ailleurs qu’icy faites. Comme plus amplement & au long est contenu en son Procès.

## S E N T E N C E.

“ **N**OUS Sindiques, Juges des Causes criminelles de cette Cité, aians veu le Procès fait & formé par devant Nous, à l’instance de nostre Lieutenant es dites causes instant, contre toi Michel Servet, de Ville-neuve au Royaume d’Aragon en Espagne, par lequel & tes volontaires confessions en nos mains faites, & par plusieurs fois réitérées, & tes livres devant Nous produits, Nous conste & appert Toy Servet avoir dès long temps mis en avant Doctrine fausse & pleinment hereticale, & icelle, mettant arriere toutes remonstrances & corrections, avoir d’une malicieuse & perverse obstination, perseveramment semée & divulguée jusques à l’impression de livres publics, contre Dieu le Pere, le Fils, & le Saint Esprit; bref contre les vrais fondemens de la Religion Chrestienne, & pour cela tasché de faire schisme & trouble en l’Eglise de Dieu, dont maintes ames ont peu estre ruinées & perdues (chose horrible & épouvantable, scandaleuse & infectante) & n’avoir eu honte ni horreur de te dresser totalement contre la Majesté Divine & Sainte Trinité; ains avoir mis peine, & t’estre employé obstinément à infecter le monde de tes heresies & puante Poison hereticale. Cas & crime d’heresie grief & detestable, & meritant grieve punition corporelle.

A ces causes, & autres justes à ce Nous mouvantes, desirans de purger l’Eglise de Dieu de tel infectement, & retrancher d’icelle tel membre pourri; aians eu bonne participation de conseil avec nos Citoyens, & aians invoqué le nom de Dieu, pour faire droit jugement, seans pour Tribunal au lieu de nos Majeurs, aians Dieu & ses saintes Escritures devant nos yeux, disans, *Au nom du Pere, du Fils, & du Saint Esprit*; par cette nostre definitive Sentence, laquelle donnons ici par escrit, Toy Michel Servet condamnons à devoir estre lié & mené au lieu de *Chapel*, & là devoir estre à un pilotis attaché, & brulé tout vif avec ton livre, tant escrit de ta main

“ qu’



“ qu’ imprimé, jusques à ce que ton corps  
 “ soit réduit en cendre ; & ainsi finiras tes  
 “ jours, pour donner exemple aux autres,  
 “ qui tel cas voudroient commettre. Et à  
 “ vous, Nostre Lieutenant, commandons  
 “ nostre presente Sentence faites mettre en  
 “ execution.

That is,

PROCESS drawn up before our most  
 dreaded Lords the Syndics, Judges of  
 Criminal Causes in this City, at the  
 Pursuit and Instance of the Lord Lieu-  
 tenant of the said City,

Against

Michael Servetus of Villanueva in  
 the Kingdom of Arragon in Spain.

“ **W**H<sup>O</sup>, in the first place, has been  
 “ convicted of having, about  
 “ 23 or 24 Years ago, caused a Book to be  
 “ printed at Agnon ( it should be Haguenau )  
 “ in Germany, against the holy and undivided  
 “ Trinity, containing many great Blasphemies  
 “ against it, which have occasioned a  
 “ great Scandal in the Churches of the said  
 “ Germany : Which Book he has freely con-  
 “ fessed to have printed, notwithstanding the  
 “ Remonstrances made to him about his  
 “ false Opinions, by the Learned Evangelical  
 “ Doctors of the said Germany.

“ Item, The said Book was condemned by  
 “ the Doctors of the said Churches of Ger-  
 “ many, as being full of Heresies ; and the  
 “ said Servetus ran away from the said Ger-  
 “ many on account of the said Book.

“ Item, Notwithstanding this, the said  
 “ Servetus has persisted in his Errors, infect-  
 “ ing many People with them.

“ Item, Not contented with this, the bet-  
 “ ter to spread his Venom and Heresy, he  
 “ has not long since caused another Book to  
 “ be printed privately at Vienne in Dauphine,  
 “ full of the said Heresies, and horrid and  
 “ execrable Blasphemies against the Holy  
 “ Trinity, against the Son of God, and In-  
 “ fant-baptism, and against many other Ar-  
 “ ticles and fundamental Points of the Chri-  
 “ stian Religion.

“ Item, He has freely confessed that in the  
 “ said Book he calls those, who believe the  
 “ Trinity, Trinitarians and Atheists.

“ Item, He calls the Trinity a D— and  
 “ a M—ter with th—e H—ds (a).

“ Item, Contrary to the true Foundation  
 “ of the Christian Religion, and blasphem-  
 “ ing horribly against the Son of God, he  
 “ says that Christ is not the Son of God  
 “ from all Eternity, but only from the time  
 “ of his Incarnation.

“ Item, Whereas the Scripture says, that  
 “ Jesus Christ is the Son of David according  
 “ to the Flesh, he wretchedly denies it, and  
 “ says he was formed of the Substance of  
 “ God the Father, having received three E-  
 “ lements from him, and one only from the  
 “ Virgin ; whereby he wickedly pretends to  
 “ destroy the true Humanity of our Lord  
 “ Jesus Christ, the sovereign Comfort of  
 “ poor Mankind.

“ Item, That Infant-baptism is a diabolical  
 “ Invention and a mere Conjuratation.

“ Item, Many other Things, and execra-  
 “ ble Blasphemies, with which the said  
 “ Book is all over stuffed, very scandalous,  
 “ and against the Honour and Majesty of  
 “ God, the Son of God, and the Holy  
 “ Ghost : Which is a cruel and horrid  
 “ Murthering, Perdition, and Destruction  
 “ of many poor Souls, that are spoiled by  
 “ the said false and execrable Doctrine. A  
 “ dreadful thing to be mentioned.

“ Item, The said Servetus being full of  
 “ Malice has entituled the said Book, writ-  
 “ ten against God, and his Evangelical Do-  
 “ ctrine, CHRISTIANISMI RESTITUTIO,  
 “ that is, Christianity Restored ; the better to  
 “ seduce and deceive ignorant People, and  
 “ that he might more easily infect the Rea-  
 “ ders of the said Book with his wretched  
 “ and pernicious Venom, under pretence of  
 “ teaching a good Doctrine.

“ Item, Besides the said Book, attacking  
 “ our Faith even with Letters, and endea-  
 “ vouring to infect it with his Poison, he  
 “ has freely confessed and acknowledged to  
 “ have writ a Letter to one of the Mini-  
 “ sters of this City, in which among ma-  
 “ ny horrid and enormous Blasphemies  
 “ against our Holy Evangelical Religion, he  
 “ says our Gospel is without Faith, and

(a) The word Blasphemy is very ambiguous,  
 when applied to Hereticks. However, I have so  
 great an Horror for every thing that goes by that  
 Name, that I have contrabed the Words of this  
 extravagant Heretick.

“ with

“ without a God, and that instead of a God  
“ we have a th——e H——d C——us.

“ *Item*, He has moreover confess'd, that  
“ he was committed to Prison in the above-  
“ said City of *Vienna*, which he perfidiously  
“ broke, and made his Escape.

“ *Item*, The said *Servetus* did not only rise  
“ up against the true Christian Religion,  
“ but like an arrogant Broacher of Heresies,  
“ against the Popish, and others; in so much  
“ that he was burnt in Effigie at *Vienna* with  
“ Five Bales of his Books.

“ *Item*, Notwithstanding all this, being  
“ committed to the Prison of this City, he  
“ has maliciously persisted in his pernicious  
“ and detestable Errors, endeavouring to  
“ maintain them with injurious Words and  
“ Calumnies against all true Christians, and  
“ faithful Professors of the pure and unspot-  
“ ted Christian Religion, calling them *Tri-*  
“ *nitarians*, *Atheists*, and *Conjurers*, not-  
“ withstanding the Remonstrances made to  
“ him long ago in *Germany*, as has been  
“ said, and tho' he has been reprov'd, and  
“ imprisoned here and elsewhere. As may  
“ be seen more at large in his Trial.

#### THE SENTENCE.

“ **W**E Syndics, Judges of criminal  
“ Causes in this City, having  
“ seen the Process drawn up before us, at  
“ the Instance of our Lieutenant, against  
“ thee *Michael Servetus* of *Villanueva* in the  
“ Kingdom of *Arragon* in *Spain*, whereby,  
“ and also by thy voluntary Confessions  
“ made in our Presence, and repeated sever-  
“ al times, and by thy Books produced before  
“ us, it plainly appears to us, that Thou,  
“ *Servetus*, hast long ago put forth a false  
“ and heretical Doctrine, and that slighting  
“ all Remonstrances and Reproofs, thou hast  
“ with a malicious and wicked Obstinacy  
“ continued to spread and publish it, so far  
“ as to print Books against God the Father,  
“ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in short,  
“ against the true Foundations of the Chri-  
“ stian Religion, endeavouring to cause a  
“ Schism and Disturbance in the Church of  
“ God, whereby many Souls might have  
“ been destroyed and undone; (a Thing  
“ horrid and dreadful, scandalous and in-  
“ fecting) and that thou hast not been  
“ ashamed, nor afraid, of rising up against  
“ the Divine Majesty, and the Holy Trini-

“ ty, doing thy utmost Endeavours to infect  
“ the World with thy Heresies and stinking  
“ Heretical Poison. For these Causes,  
“ and others moving us thereunto, desiring  
“ to clear the Church of God from such an  
“ Infection, and to cut off such a rotten  
“ Member; having consulted our Citizens,  
“ and invoked the Name of God to give a  
“ right Judgment; sitting in the place of  
“ our Ancestors; having God and his Holy  
“ Scripture before our Eyes; saying, *In*  
“ *the Name of the Father, and of the Son,*  
“ *and of the Holy Ghost*; by this our de-  
“ finitive Sentence, which we give in Wri-  
“ ting, we condemn Thee, *Michael Servetus*,  
“ to be bound, and carried to the Place  
“ call'd *Champel*, and there to be fastned to  
“ a Post, and burnt alive with thy Books,  
“ both written with thy own Hand and  
“ printed, till thy Body be reduced to  
“ Ashes; and thus thou shalt end thy Days,  
“ to give an Example to others, who would  
“ do the like. We command you, our  
“ Lieutenant, to cause our present Sentence  
“ to be put in Execution.

It were an easy thing to make several  
Observations upon that Process, and that  
Sentence; but I confine my self to Mat-  
ters of Fact. I am, Sir, &c.

#### II.

REPONSE aux Objections contre  
le Projet d'une nouvelle Gram-  
maire, pour apprendre l'Hebreu  
& les autres Langues Orientales  
sans Points. Par M. MASCLEF  
Chanoine d'Amiens.

That is, *AN ANSWER to the Obje-*  
*ctions that may be raised against the*  
*Project \* of a new Grammar, to learn*  
*Hebrew, and other Oriental Lan-*  
*guages without Points. By M.*  
*MASCLEF, Canon of Amiens.*

I SHALL neither translate this Discourse,  
nor make a full Extract of it; being of

\* The first part of this Project may be seen  
in the LXXXIXth Sheet of the 1st Volume of  
these Memoirs; and the Second Part in the 1st  
Sheet of the 2d Volume. Opi-



Opinion, that it will be sufficient to enlarge upon that Part, wherein the Author undertakes to shew, that the Truth of his New Method has been fully proved by his own Experience.

About the latter End of the Year 1694. M. Mafclef being discouraged a Third Time from learning *Hebrew*, by reason of the Difficulties he met with in the very Beginning of the common Grammars, and because he knew the greatest Proficients in that Language cannot easily read and translate it without Points; it came into his Thoughts to enquire, whether *Hebrew* might be learned without the Help of Points. He knew those Vowels are a new Invention, and that *Hebrew* was formerly read and learn'd without them; from whence he inferr'd, that it was not impossible to read and learn it still in the same manner. He saw that the Want of Vowels was the only Reason why *Hebrew* could not be read without Points; but he perceived at the same time, that Vowels were to be found in a great many Places, (for he could not believe that *א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת* were Consonants,) and that they might be understood in those places where they are wanting; that the Sense of the Words lying in the Characters, he might supply any Vowels; it being an indifferent thing whether he pronounced *Hebrew* as the Ancients did, or according to the Method of the *Massorets*, or in a new way, provided he understood himself, and had some short and easy Rules to know constantly in what place he was to supply Vowels, and what Vowels were to be supplied. Having examined several ways of supplying those Vowels, and duly considered the Advantages and Inconveniencies arising from each of them, at last the Method mentioned in his *Project* came into his Mind. It appeared to him very easy; He tried to read according to that Method; and in a Quarter of an Hour he read with great Facility.

Being well pleased with this Discovery, he enquired whether the Grammar would agree with that Method, and whether the Characters without Points, would enable him to distinguish all the Parts of Speech one from another, and their several Modifications. He immediately perceived, that there was no Difficulty in his Method, as to those Parts of Speech that are undeclinable; and that Dictionaries would teach the Na-

ture of those Words, and their Significations, in the same manner, and with the same Facility, as they are learn'd by the usual Methods. He made the Experiment. It answered his Expectation.

Our Author proceeded to those Parts of Speech, that are declined and conjugated; and observed, that it was generally an easy thing to distinguish the Genders, the Numbers, and some Cases of Nouns and Participles by the Characters without the Help of Points. Afterwards he perceived, that it was much the same thing with the Verbs, the more because the *Hebrew* Verbs have few Tenses and Moods; that one might easily distinguish the Pretense and the Future, their figurative Characters being wholly different; that the Persons and Numbers of those Two Tenses are also sufficiently distinguish'd by their Characters; that it was likewise an easy thing to distinguish a considerable part of the Conjugation *Kal* from *Niphal*, *Hiphal*, *Hophal* and *Hithpaal*; and that the Four last Conjugations having different figurative Letters, he might also generally distinguish them one from another. 'Tis true he perceived that the Conjugations *Piel*, *Pual*, and even *Poel* could not be distinguish'd from *Kal* without the Help of Points. But far from looking upon it as an Inconveniency, he took it to be an Advantage of his New Method, being of Opinion, that since those Three Conjugations seem to be a mere Invention of the *Massorets*, because their Difference from *Kal* lies only in the Points, they might very well be left out; by which Means some Difficulties of the *Hebrew* Grammar would vanish away.

M. Mafclef adds, that the only Difficulty he met with, concerns some Modifications, which cannot be distinguish'd by the Characters, and some ambiguous Words, the Sense whereof is only determin'd by the Points. But, says he, all those who read the Bible without Points, find themselves engaged in the same Difficulty. Besides, it is a Question whether certain Words ought to have the Modification and the Sense bestowed upon them by the Pointing of the *Massorets*. Lastly, he was apt to believe that the Sense and Modification of those ambiguous Words might be generally determin'd by the Exigency of the Place, as it frequently happens in all other Languages, either dead or living.

Thus



Thus perceiving no other Difficulty but what he thought he might easily overcome, he began to translate. He knew it was not necessary to understand the Grammar thoroughly in order to go about such a Work. The Rules he had observed in the common Grammars, to know the different Modifications of Nouns and Verbs, with the help of the Letters, appeared to him sufficient for a beginning, being of Opinion that he might learn the rest by use and Exercise. The first Essays of his Translation succeeded beyond his Hopes: He went on, and made a new Progress every Day.

Hitherto he had read but few critical Books upon the Holy Scripture, having turned his Studies another way. He read some then, and among others the critical History of the Old Testament, wherein he found many things, that convinced him of the Solidity of his Design, and how necessary it was to put it in Execution.

The Author having found out the Secret of reading *Hebrew* without Points, went on, and with the help of the common Grammars, leaving out every thing that concerns the Points, he happily read all the *Hebrew* Bible. He made the same Experiment upon the *Chaldaick* Text of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, upon all the *Chaldaick* Paraphrases, and a great part of the *Syriack* Version, both of the Old and New Testament, and upon some Pieces of the *Samaritan*; wherein he had the same Success: Which convinced him that his Method was equally proper for all those Languages. M. Maselef would have publish'd his *Hebrew* Grammar in 1696, and perhaps some Grammars for the other Oriental Languages soon after, had it not been for some Employments, which for the space of near Fourteen Years did not allow him to mind the *Hebrew* Tongue.

He says he does not propose a Method grounded upon mere Conjectures, since he has tried it, and the Success has answered his Expectation. Had he understood the *Hebrew* Language then according to the common Methods, one might think he is deluded by his Fancy, and that he ascribes to his new Method what should be ascribed to something else; but all those who know him, will testify that he had no Skill in *Hebrew*, and could not so much as conjugate, when he began to learn it in his own way. Nay, at this very time he knows nothing of the different Uses and Changes of Points, nor the very Figure and Import of some of them. He has not spent a great deal of Time in learning the *Hebrew* Tongue, and he might have done it much sooner, had he had such a Grammar as that which he has drawn up, and had he been able to remove some Obstacles, which stopt him now and then.

M. Maselef can hardly believe that his new Method will not meet with a good Reception from the Publick. It might have been rejected (says he) as a mere Fancy in a less knowing Age; but the Principles on which it is grounded being now generally admitted, he hopes for a better Success. However he does not expect to have an universal Approbation: One must be very little acquainted with the History of the World, (says he,) to flatter himself with it upon any Work whatsoever, and least of all upon a Work of this Nature. The new Method (continues our Author) will doubtless be attack'd by those, who think it very hard to despise and to forget in their old Days, what they learn'd in their Youth, and that others should get with little Labour that Knowledge, which they could not attain to without great Pains.

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